

Appl. No. : 10/620,323
Filed : July 15, 2003

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1-64. (Canceled)

65. (New) A bicycle front fork, comprising:

a compression fluid chamber configured to decrease in volume during at least a portion of the compression of said fork;

a lock-out valve, said lock-out valve in fluid communication with said compression fluid chamber, and having at least two positions; wherein:

in a first position, fluid flow from said compression fluid chamber is substantially unrestricted by said lock-out valve, and

in a second position, fluid flow from said compression fluid chamber is at least partially blocked by said lock-out valve;

a first external adjuster permitting external adjustment of said lock-out valve between at least said two positions;

a blow-off valve associated with said compression fluid chamber, said blow-off valve allowing flow from said compression fluid chamber in response to the pressure in said chamber being equal to or greater than a threshold pressure; and

a second external adjuster, said second external adjuster permitting external adjustment of said threshold pressure;

whereby adjustments to said threshold pressure may be made without tools.

66. (New) A method of operating a compressible bicycle fork having lock-out and blow-off features, including the step of adjusting a threshold pressure at which said blow-off feature operates, said adjustment step being performed without tools.

67. (New) A method of making a compressible bicycle fork, including the steps of:

a) providing said fork with a lock-out valve;

b) providing said fork with a blow-off valve having a threshold pressure at which said blow-off valve opens and allows fluid flow there through;

c) providing said fork with the ability for its user to make tool-less adjustments of said threshold pressure.

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68. (New) A compressible bicycle fork, comprising:

first and second telescopingly engaged tubes configured to move closer together during compression of said fork;

an adjustable lock-out valve, said lock-out valve having a plurality of operator-selectable positions, one of said operator-selectable positions of said lock-out valve at least inhibiting said first and second tubes from moving closer together when subjected to a range of compressive forces;

a manually adjustable blow-off valve capable of tool-less adjustment, said blow-off valve allowing said first and second tubes to move closer together in response to a pressure imparted on said valve being equal to or greater than a operator-selectable threshold pressure when said lock-out valve is in its movement inhibiting position; said threshold pressure exceeding said range of compressive forces.

69. (New) The fork of claim 68, wherein said operator-selectable position of said lock-out valve that at least inhibits said first and second tubes from moving closer together when subjected to said range of compressive forces substantially prevents said first and second tubes from moving closer together when subjected to said range of compressive forces.

70. (New) The fork of claim 68, wherein said range of compressive forces includes at least low-speed compression forces.

71. (New) The fork of claim 70, wherein said range of compressive forces further includes at least mid-speed compression forces.

72. (New) A compressible bicycle fork, comprising:

first and second tubes configured to move closer together during the compression of said fork;

a manually adjustable lock-out valve, said lock-out valve having a plurality of operator selectable positions, one of said operator-selectable positions of said lock-out valve at least inhibiting said first and second tubes from moving closer together when subjected to a range of compressive forces;

a manually adjustable blow-off valve capable of tool-less adjustment, said blow-off valve having a plurality of operator-selectable positions, each of said operator-selectable positions of said blow-off valve altering the magnitude of the force that must

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be imparted on said fork for said first and second tubes to move closer together when said lock-out valve is in its movement inhibiting position.

73. (New) The fork of claim 72, wherein said range of compressive forces includes at least low-speed compression forces.

74. (New) The fork of claim 73, wherein said range of compressive forces further includes at least mid-speed compression forces.